

**CABLE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT**  
**BETWEEN**  
**THE TOWN OF BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA**  
**AND**  
**SHENANDOAH CABLE TELEVISION, LLC**

**Draft as of September 4, 2020**

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## **CABLE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT**

This Cable Franchise Agreement (hereinafter, the “Agreement” or “Franchise Agreement”) is made between the Town of Blacksburg, VA, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia (hereinafter, “Town”) and Shenandoah Cable Television, LLC (hereinafter, “Franchisee”).

The Town, having determined that the financial, legal and technical ability of the Franchisee is reasonably sufficient to provide the services, facilities and equipment necessary to meet the future cable-related needs of the community, desires to enter into this Franchise Agreement with the Franchisee for the construction, operation and maintenance of a Cable System on the terms and conditions set forth herein.

### **SECTION 1 - Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this Franchise Agreement, capitalized terms, phrases, words, and abbreviations shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Article 1.2, § 15.2-2108.19, and the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, as amended from time to time, 47 U.S.C. §§ 521 et seq. (the “Cable Act”), unless otherwise defined herein.

1.1 “Act” means the Communications Act of 1934.

1.2 “Affiliate”, in relation to any Person, means another Person who owns or controls, is owned or controlled by, or is under common ownership or control with, such Person.

1.3 “Basic service tier” means the service tier that includes (i) the retransmission of local television broadcast channels and (ii) public, educational, and governmental channels required to be carried in the basic tier.

1.4 “Cable Operator” means any Person or group of Persons that (A) provides Cable Service over a Cable System and directly or through one or more affiliates owns a significant interest in such Cable System or (B) otherwise controls or is responsible for, through any arrangement, the management and operation of a Cable System. Cable Operator does not include a provider of wireless or direct-to-home satellite transmission service.

1.5 “Cable Service” means the one-way transmission to Subscribers of (i) video programming or (ii) other programming service, and Subscriber interaction, if any, which is required for the selection or use of such video programming or other programming service. Cable service does not include any video programming provided by a commercial mobile service provider defined in 47 U.S.C. § 332(d).

1.6 “Cable System” or “System” means any facility consisting of a set of closed transmission paths and associated signal generation, reception and control

equipment that is designed to provide Cable Service that includes video programming and that is provided to multiple Subscribers within a community, except that such definition shall not include (i) a system that serves fewer than 20 Subscribers; (ii) a facility that serves only to retransmit the television signals of one or more television broadcast stations; (iii) a facility that serves only Subscribers without using any public right-of-way; (iv) a facility of a common carrier that is subject, in whole or in part, to the provisions of Title II of the Communications Act of 1934, 47 USC § 201 et seq., except that such facility shall be considered a Cable System to the extent such facility is used in the transmission of video programming directly to Subscribers, unless the extent of such use is solely to provide interactive on-demand services; (v) any facilities of any electric utility used solely for operating its electric systems; (vi) or any portion of a System that serves fewer than 50 Subscribers in any locality, where such portion is part of a larger System franchised in an adjacent locality; or (vii) an open video system that complies with § 653 of Title VI of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. § 573.

1.7 “Customer” or “Subscriber” means a Person or user of the Cable System who lawfully receives Cable Service therefrom with the Franchisee’s express permission.

1.8 “Effective Date” means the date on which this Cable Franchise Agreement, with any necessary executed signatures, is enacted into law.

1.9 “FCC” means the Federal Communications Commission or successor governmental entity thereto.

1.10 “Force majeure” means an event or events reasonably beyond the ability of Franchisee to anticipate and control. "Force majeure" includes, but is not limited to, acts of God, incidences of terrorism, war or riots, labor strikes or civil disturbances, floods, earthquakes, fire, explosions, epidemics, hurricanes, tornadoes, governmental actions and restrictions, work delays caused by waiting for utility providers to service or monitor or provide access to utility poles to which Franchisee’s facilities are attached or to be attached or conduits in which Franchisee's facilities are located or to be located, and unavailability of materials or qualified labor to perform the work necessary.

1.11 “Franchise” means the initial authorization, or renewal thereof, issued by the Franchising Authority, whether such authorization is designated as a franchise, agreement, permit, license, resolution, contract, certificate, ordinance or otherwise, which authorizes the construction and operation of the Cable System in the public rights-of-way.

1.12 “Franchise Agreement” or “Agreement” shall mean this Cable Franchise Agreement and any amendments or modifications hereto.

1.13 “Franchise Area” means the present legal boundaries of the Town of Blacksburg, Virginia as of the Effective Date, and shall also include any additions thereto, by annexation or other legal means.

1.14 "Franchising Authority" means the Town or the lawful successor, transferee, designee, or assignee thereof.

1.15 "Franchisee" shall mean Shenandoah Cable Television, LLC.

1.16 "Gross revenue" means all revenue, as determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, that is actually received by the cable operator and derived from the operation of the cable system to provide cable services in the franchise area; however, "gross revenue" shall not include: (i) refunds or rebates made to subscribers or other third parties; (ii) any revenue which is received from the sale of merchandise over home shopping channels carried on the cable system, but not including revenue received from home shopping channels for the use of the cable service to sell merchandise; (iii) any tax, fee, or charge collected by the cable operator and remitted to a governmental entity or its agent or designee, including without limitation a local public access or education group; (iv) program launch fees; (v) directory or Internet advertising revenue including, but not limited to, yellow page, white page, banner advertisement, and electronic publishing; (vi) a sale of cable service for resale or for use as a component part of or for the integration into cable services to be resold in the ordinary course of business, when the reseller is required to pay or collect franchise fees or similar fees on the resale of the cable service; (vii) revenues received by any affiliate or any other person in exchange for supplying goods or services used by the cable operator to provide cable service; and (viii) revenue derived from services classified as noncable services under federal law, including, without limitation, revenue derived from telecommunications services and information services, and any other revenues attributed by the cable operator to noncable services in accordance with rules, regulations, standards, or orders of the Federal Communications Commission.

1.17 "Ordinance" includes a resolution.

1.18 "Person" means any natural person or any association, firm, partnership, joint venture, corporation, or other legally recognized entity, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, but shall not mean the Franchising Authority.

1.19 "Public rights-of-way" (PROW or Public Way) means the surface, the air space above the surface, and the area below the surface of any public street, highway, lane, path, alley, sidewalk, boulevard, drive, bridge, tunnel, park, parkway, waterway, easement, or similar property in which the Town or the Commonwealth of Virginia now or hereafter holds any property interest, which, consistent with the purposes for which it was dedicated, may be used for the purpose of installing and maintaining a cable system. No reference herein, or in any franchise, to a "public rights-of-way" shall be deemed to be a representation or guarantee by the Town that its interest or other right to control the use of such property is sufficient to permit its use for such purposes, and Franchisee shall be deemed to gain only those rights to use as are properly in the Town and as the Town may have the undisputed right and power to give. For purposes of this Franchise, the term "public right-of-way" shall also include any other parcels of property that are owned by the Town.

1.20 “Interactive on-demand services” means a service providing video programming to Subscribers over switched networks on an on-demand, point-to-point basis, but does not include services providing video programming prescheduled by the programming provider.

1.21 “Service Interruption” means a service outage affecting less than five subscribers, or a loss or degradation of either video or audio for one or more channels for one or more subscribers.

1.22 “Service Outage” means the complete loss of cable service to five or more subscribers served by the same trunk, node, or feeder line for a period of 15 minutes or more.

1.23 “Transfer” means any transaction in which (i) an ownership or other interest in the Franchisee is transferred, directly or indirectly, from one Person or group of Persons to another Person or group of Persons, so that majority control of the Franchisee is transferred; or (ii) the rights and obligations held by the Franchisee under the Franchise granted under this Franchise Agreement are transferred or assigned to another Person or group of Persons. However, notwithstanding clauses (i) and (ii) of the preceding sentence, a transfer of the Franchise shall not include (a) transfer of an ownership or other interest in the Franchisee to the parent of the Franchisee or to another Affiliate of the Franchisee; (b) transfer of an interest in the Franchise granted under this Franchise Agreement or the rights held by the Franchisee under the Franchise granted under this Franchise Agreement to the parent of the Franchisee or to another Affiliate of the Franchisee; (c) any action that is the result of a merger of the parent of the Franchisee; (d) any action that is the result of a merger of another Affiliate of the Franchisee; or (e) a transfer in trust, by mortgage, or by assignment of any rights, title, or interest of the Franchisee in the Franchise or the System used to provide Cable Service in order to secure indebtedness.

1.24 “Video programming” means programming provided by, or generally considered comparable to, programming provided by a television broadcast station.

All terms used herein, unless otherwise defined, shall have the same meaning as set forth in Sections 15.2-2108.19 *et seq.* of the Code of Virginia, and if not defined therein, then as set forth in Title VI of the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. § 521 *et seq.*, and if not defined therein, their common and ordinary meaning. In addition, references in this Ordinance to any federal or state law shall include amendments thereto as are enacted from time-to-time.

## **SECTION 2 - Grant of Authority**

2.1 The Franchising Authority hereby grants to the Franchisee under the Code of Virginia and the Cable Act a nonexclusive Franchise authorizing the Franchisee to construct and operate a Cable System in the Public Ways within the Franchise Area, and

for that purpose to erect, install, construct, repair, replace, reconstruct, maintain, or retain in any Public Way such poles, wires, cables, conductors, ducts, conduits, vaults, manholes, pedestals, amplifiers, appliances, attachments, and other related property or equipment as may be necessary or appurtenant to the Cable System and to provide such Cable Services over the Cable System as may be lawfully allowed. This agreement neither authorizes the Franchisee to use the PROW for purposes of providing any service other than Cable Service, nor prohibits the Franchisee from doing so. The Franchisee's authority to provide non-Cable Services shall be subject to applicable law.

2.2 Term of Franchise. The term of the Franchise granted hereunder shall be Fifteen (15) years, beginning on November 1, 2020, unless the Franchise is renewed or is lawfully terminated in accordance with the terms of this Franchise Agreement and the Code of Virginia and the Cable Act.

2.3 Renewal. Any renewal of this Franchise shall be governed by and comply with the provisions of Title 15.2, Article 1.2 of the Code of Virginia and Section 626 of the Cable Act, as amended.

2.4 Reservation of Authority. Nothing in this Franchise Agreement shall be construed as a waiver of any codes or ordinances of general applicability promulgated by the Franchising Authority.

## 2.5 Competitive Equity.

2.5.1 If the Town grants a competitive franchise which, in the reasonable opinion of the Franchisee, contains more favorable or less burdensome terms or conditions than this Franchise Agreement, the Franchisee may notify the Town that it wishes to renegotiate certain specified provisions of the Franchise Agreement. Within 30 days after the Franchisee provides such notice, both parties must begin to negotiate in good faith, and either party to this Franchise Agreement may request changes to amend this Agreement so that neither the Franchisee's Franchise Agreement nor that of the competitor contains terms that are more favorable or less burdensome than the other. For purposes of this section, the franchises must be viewed as a whole, not on a provision-by-provision basis, and the franchises must be compared with due regard for the circumstances existing at the time each franchise was granted.

2.5.2 In the event an application for a new cable television franchise is filed with the Franchising Authority proposing to serve the Franchising Area, in whole or in part, the Franchising Authority shall serve or require to be served a copy of such application upon the Franchisee by registered or certified mail or via nationally recognized overnight courier service within ten (10) days of receipt by the Franchising Authority.

2.5.3 In the event that a cable provider provides Cable Service to the residents of the Town under a federal franchise that is unavailable to the Franchisee, the Franchisee shall have a right to request amendments to this Franchise Agreement that

relieve the Franchisee of regulatory burdens that create a competitive disadvantage to the Franchisee. In requesting amendments, the Franchisee shall file a petition seeking to amend the Franchise Agreement. Such petition shall: (1) indicate the presence of a competitor that has a federal franchise; (2) identify the basis for Franchisee's belief that certain provisions of the Franchise Agreement place Franchisee at a competitive disadvantage; and (3) identify the regulatory burdens to be amended or repealed in order to eliminate the competitive disadvantage. Town Council shall hold a public hearing to evaluate the petition and hear views of interested parties. The Franchising Authority shall not unreasonably withhold consent to the Franchisee's petition.

### **SECTION 3 – Construction and Maintenance of the Cable System**

3.1 Permits and General Obligations. The Franchisee shall be responsible for obtaining, at its own cost and expense, all generally applicable permits, licenses, or other forms of approval or authorization necessary to construct, operate, maintain or repair the Cable System, or any part thereof, prior to the commencement of any such activity. Construction, installation, and maintenance of the Cable System shall be performed in a safe, thorough and reliable manner using materials of good and durable quality. All transmission and distribution structures, poles, other lines, and equipment installed by the Franchisee for use in the Cable System in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Franchise Agreement shall be located so as to minimize the interference with the proper use of the Public Ways and the rights and reasonable convenience of property owners who own property that adjoins any such Public Way.

#### **3.2 Conditions of Street Occupancy.**

3.2.1 New Grades or Lines. If the grades or lines of any Public Way within the Franchise Area are lawfully changed at any time during the term of this Franchise Agreement, then the Franchisee shall, upon reasonable advance written notice from the Franchising Authority (which shall not be less than ten (10) business days) and at its own cost and expense, protect or promptly alter or relocate the Cable System, or any part thereof, so as to conform with any such new grades or lines. If public funds are available to any other user of the Public Way for the purpose of defraying the cost of any of the foregoing, the Franchising Authority shall notify the Franchisee of the availability of such funding and make such funds available to the Franchisee. It is understood that there is no guarantee by the Franchising Authority that any public funds will be available to help defray the cost of altering or relocating the Cable System to conform to new grades or lines.

3.2.2 Relocation at request of Third Party. The Franchisee shall, upon reasonable prior written request of any Person holding a permit issued by the Franchising Authority to move any structure, temporarily move its wires to permit the moving of such structure; provided (i) the Franchisee may impose a reasonable charge on any Person for the movement of its wires, and such charge may be required to be paid in advance of the



movement of its wires; and (ii) the Franchisee is given not less than ten (10) business days advance written notice to arrange for such temporary relocation.

3.2.3 Restoration of Public Ways. If in connection with the construction, operation, maintenance, or repair of the Cable System, the Franchisee disturbs, alters, or damages any Public Way, the Franchisee agrees that it shall at its own cost and expense replace and restore any such Public Way to a condition reasonably comparable to the condition of the Public Way existing immediately prior to the disturbance. The Town Engineer shall make the final determination as to acceptability of repair and/or replacement of damaged facilities. In performing any excavation work in the public rights-of-way, the Franchisee will comply with all of the requirements of applicable Town law.

3.2.4 Safety Requirements. The Franchisee shall, at its own cost and expense, undertake all necessary and appropriate efforts to maintain its work sites in a safe manner in order to prevent failures and accidents that may cause damage, injuries or nuisances. All work undertaken on the Cable System shall be performed in substantial accordance with applicable FCC or other federal and state regulations and with the National Electrical Safety Code (National Bureau of Standards)” and “National Electrical Code (National Bureau of Fire Underwriters). The Cable System shall not unreasonably endanger or interfere with the safety of Persons or property in the Franchise Area.

3.2.5 Trimming of Trees and Shrubbery. The Franchisee shall have the responsibility and authority to trim trees or other natural growth overhanging any of its Cable System in the Franchise Area so as to prevent contact with the Franchisee’s wires, cables, or other equipment. All such trimming shall be done at the Franchisee’s sole cost and expense and in accordance with ANSI A300 pruning standards. For all planned trimming, the Franchisee shall provide the Town at least two business days notice of the work to be performed and a description of such work. For trimming of an emergency nature, including responding to storm damage, advance notice is not required. The Franchisee shall be responsible for any damage and all clean up of debris caused by such trimming.

3.2.6 Aerial and Underground Construction. At the time of Cable System construction, if all of the transmission and distribution facilities of all of the respective public or municipal utilities in any area of the Franchise Area are underground, the Franchisee shall place its Cable System’s transmission and distribution facilities underground; provided that such underground locations are actually capable of accommodating the Franchisee’s cable and other equipment without technical degradation of the Cable System’s signal quality. In any region(s) of the Franchise Area where the transmission or distribution facilities of the respective public or municipal utilities are both aerial and underground, the Franchisee shall have the discretion to construct, operate, and maintain all of its transmission and distribution facilities, or any part thereof, aerially or underground. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to require the Franchisee to construct, operate, or maintain underground any ground-

mounted appurtenances such as customer taps, line extenders, system passive devices, amplifiers, power supplies, pedestals, or other related equipment.

3.2.7 All excavation and reconstruction work by Franchisee in the public rights-of-way must be in compliance with the requirements of local law, including all of the standards referenced therein, and all applicable VDOT standards. It shall be the responsibility of Franchisee to obtain any required permits, to review all applicable excavation, reconstruction, restoration, repair and permitting requirements, and to become familiar with such requirements before beginning any excavation, reconstruction, restoration or repair work in the public rights-of-way or private property.

3.2.8 Any equipment or facilities installed by Franchisee in the public rights-of-way shall be installed, located, erected, constructed, reconstructed, replaced, restored, removed, repaired, maintained and operated in accordance with good engineering practices, performed by experienced maintenance and construction personnel so as not (1) to endanger or interfere in any manner with improvements the Town or VDOT may deem appropriate to make; or (2) to interfere with the rights of any private property owner; or (3) to hinder or obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

3.2.9 Whenever the Town or VDOT shall determine that it is necessary in connection with the repair, relocation, or improvement of the public rights-of-way, the Town or VDOT may require by written notification that any properties or facilities of the Franchisee be removed or relocated. Within one hundred and twenty (120) days after receipt of notification, unless the Town or VDOT extends such period for good cause shown, the Franchisee shall remove or relocate its facilities to such place and under such terms and conditions as specified by the Town or VDOT. The Franchisee shall bear all expenses associated with the removal and relocation except that the Town or VDOT will issue, without charge to the Franchisee, whatever local permits are required for the relocation of Franchisee's facilities. If the Franchisee does not complete its removal or relocation within 120 days or such other period as authorized by the Town or VDOT, the Town or VDOT may take such actions as necessary to effect such removal or relocation at the Franchisee's expense. Franchisee shall be entitled to reimbursement of its relocation costs from public or private funds raised for the project and made available to other users of the Public Way. It is understood that there is no guarantee by the Franchising Authority that any public or private funds will be available to help defray the cost of such undergrounding or beautification projects.

3.2.10 Undergrounding and Beautification Projects. In the event all users of the Public Way relocate aerial facilities underground as part of an undergrounding or neighborhood beautification project, Franchisee shall participate in the planning for relocation of its aerial facilities contemporaneously with other utilities. Franchisee's relocation costs shall be included in any computation of necessary project funding by the municipality or private parties. Franchisee shall be entitled to reimbursement of its relocation costs from public or private funds raised for the project and made available to other users of the Public Way. It is understood that there is no guarantee by the Franchising Authority that any public or private funds will be available to help defray the cost of such undergrounding or beautification projects.

## SECTION 4 - Service Obligations

### 4.1 General Service Obligations.

4.1.1 Franchisee shall be required to extend energized trunk cable and make Cable Service generally available to businesses and residential dwelling units within the Franchise Area. The Grantee initially shall build out its Cable System to make Cable Service generally available to those businesses and residential units located within the red ovals shown on the map attached to this Franchise Agreement as **Exhibit A**. Grantee shall use commercially reasonable efforts (considering build out costs, geographical and geological conditions, and business conditions) to complete initial build within 24 months of the effective date of the franchise. Grantee shall complete its Cable System within the remainder of the Franchise Area within a commercially reasonable time (considering build out costs, geographical and geological conditions, and business conditions). In addition to the obligations and considerations set forth above, Grantee shall offer Cable Service to all new or previously unserved businesses and residential units located within one hundred and fifty (150) feet of the Grantee's distribution cable. Subject to the density requirement, Franchisee shall offer Cable Service to all new homes or previously unserved homes located within 150 feet of the Franchisee's distribution cable.

4.1.2 The Franchisee may elect to provide Cable Service to areas not meeting the above distance standards. The Franchisee may impose an additional charge in excess of its regular installation charge for any service installation requiring a drop in or line extension in excess of the above standards. Any such additional charge shall be computed on a time plus materials basis to be calculated on that portion of the installation that exceeds the standards set forth above. Such additional charge shall be paid by the developer or landowner or customer requesting Cable Service in an area that does not meet the density and distance standards.

4.2 New Developments. Franchisee agrees to use commercially reasonable efforts to inform itself of all newly planned developments with the Town and to work with developers to cooperate in pre-installation of facilities to support Cable Service.

4.3 Programming. The Franchisee shall offer to all Customers a diversity of video programming services.

4.4 No Discrimination. The Franchisee shall not discriminate or permit discrimination between or among any Persons in the availability of Cable Services or other services provided in connection with the Cable System in the Franchise Area. It shall be the right of all Persons to receive all available services provided on the Cable System so long as such Person's financial or other obligations to the Franchisee are satisfied, unless such Person has engaged in theft of Franchisee's cable services, vandalism of its property or harassment of its representatives. Nothing contained herein

shall prohibit the Franchisee from offering bulk discounts, promotional discounts, package discounts, or other such pricing strategies as part of its business practice. Franchisee shall assure that access to cable services is not denied to any group of potential residential cable subscribers because of the income of the residents of the local area in which such group resides.

4.5 Subscriber Surveys: Upon ninety (90) days written request of the Town, but not more than once every three years, the Franchisee shall conduct a Subscriber satisfaction survey pertaining to quality of service, which may be transmitted to Subscribers in the Franchisee's invoice for Cable Services. The results of such survey shall be provided to the Town on a timely basis and in any case not less than three months after the survey has been distributed to the Subscribers.

4.6 Performance Evaluation Sessions: Upon two (2) weeks written request by the Town, the Town and the Franchisee shall hold scheduled performance evaluation sessions.

4.6.1 Performance Evaluation sessions shall be held no more than once every three years during the Term of the Franchise. All such evaluation sessions shall be publicized in advance and be open to the public.

4.6.2 The Franchisee shall reasonably cooperate with the evaluation and shall, subject to the proprietary information provision of Section 8.7 of this Agreement, supply the Town with all relevant information requested.

4.6.3 If the evaluation indicates a need for modification of the Agreement, the Town shall attempt to negotiate the identified changes with the Franchisee. Any changes agreed to by the Town and the Franchisee shall be approved by the Town Council before they become effective.

4.7 Availability of Maps to the Town: Upon two (2) weeks written request by the Town, but no more often than annually, the Franchisee shall make available for viewing by the Town, at the Franchisee's nearest business office, updated maps of the Franchise Area which shall clearly delineate all areas within the Franchise Area where Cable Service is available to Subscribers.

4.8 Changes in Service: Franchisee agrees to give the Town Manager thirty (30) days prior written notice of changes in the mix, or quality of the Cable Services.

## **SECTION 5 - Public, Educational and Governmental Access Channels**

5.1 Franchisee shall designate capacity on up to four (4) channels for public, educational and/or governmental ("PEG") access video programming provided by the Franchising Authority or its designee, such as a public access organization or educational

institution. On the Effective Date, Franchisee shall provide one (1) PEG access channel for the purposes of providing governmental/public access and one (1) PEG access channel for the purpose of providing educational access and to be used by Virginia Tech University. Within one hundred and twenty (120) days of receipt of a written request from the Town to activate one or both of the other access channels, Franchisee will make such channel(s) available for use by the Town or its designee; and such channel(s) may be carried in analog or digital format, at Franchisee's election. Use of a channel position for PEG access shall be provided on the most basic tier of service offered by Franchisee in accordance with the Cable Act, Section 611, and Article 1.2 of the Code of Virginia, and as further set forth below. "Channel position" means a number designation on the Franchisee's channel lineup regardless of the transmission format (analog or digital). Franchisee does not relinquish its ownership of or ultimate right of control over a channel by designating it for PEG use. In the event any Access channel is reassigned, the Franchisee shall provide the Town with at least thirty (30) days notice before reassigning the channel, and shall pay the reasonable costs of any advertising and promotional materials required due to the reassignment. A PEG access user – whether an individual, educational or governmental user – acquires no property or other interest by virtue of the use of a channel so designated, and may not rely on the continued use of a particular channel number, no matter how long the same channel may have been designated for such use. Franchisee shall not exercise editorial control over any public, educational, or governmental use of a channel position, except Franchisee may refuse to transmit any public access program or portion of a public access program that contains obscenity, indecency, or nudity. The Franchising Authority shall be responsible for developing, implementing, interpreting and enforcing rules for Educational and Governmental Access Channel use.

5.2 Public Access. A "Public Access Channel" is a channel position designated for noncommercial use by the public on a first-come, first-served, nondiscriminatory basis. A Public Access Channel may not be used to cablecast programs for profit, or for political or commercial fundraising in any fashion.

5.3 Educational Access. An "Educational Access Channel" is a channel position designated for noncommercial use by educational institutions such as public or private schools (but not "home schools"), community colleges, and universities.

5.4 Government Access. A "Governmental Access Channel" is a channel position designated for noncommercial use by the Franchising Authority for the purpose of showing the public local government at work.

5.5 Franchisee shall ensure that all PEG access channel signals carried on its system, regardless of the method used to acquire the PEG channels, comply with all applicable FCC signal quality and technical standards for all classes of signals. The technical and signal quality of all PEG access channel signals shall be preserved and shall be of comparable quality as other channels.

5.6 Franchisee shall continue to provide and maintain all existing communications facilities between its headend and the following PEG origination locations:

1. 203 SW Washington Street, Blacksburg, VA for the government/public access channel.
2. 1770 Forecast Drive, Blacksburg, VA for the Virginia Tech educational access channel.

Within one hundred and twenty (120) days of receipt of the written request from the Town to activate one or both of the other access channels discussed in Section 5.1, Franchisee will provide a connection between a location designated by the Town and Franchisee's headend for each new channel to be activated for PEG use, at no charge to the Town if the connection between the new location and the nearest usable signal insertion point in Franchisee's cable system is two hundred (200) feet or less.

5.7 Capital support for PEG access. Franchisee shall provide capital support for PEG access in the amount of one and three-fourths percent (1.75%) of Franchisee's revenues from Basic and expanded cable services (i.e., excluding pay-per-view and premium services), payable no later than thirty (30) days following the end of each calendar quarter. Payment of the ongoing capital support shall not be deemed to be "franchise fees" within the meaning of Section 622 of the Cable Act (47 U.S.C. Section 542) and such payments shall not be deemed to be (i) "payments-in-kind" or any involuntary payments chargeable against the compensation to be paid to the Town by Franchisee pursuant to Section 6 hereof, or (ii) part of the compensation to be paid to the Town by Franchisee pursuant to Section 6 hereof.

## **SECTION 6 - Communications Tax and Franchise Fees**

6.1 Communications Tax: Franchisee shall comply with the provisions of Section 58.1-645 et seq. of the Code of Virginia, pertaining to the Virginia Communications Sales and Use Tax, as amended (the "Communications Tax"), and Sections 6.2 through 6.6 of the Agreement shall not have any effect, for so long as the Communications Tax or a successor state or local tax that would constitute a franchise fee for purposes of 47 U.S.C. § 641, as amended, is imposed on the sale of cable services by the Franchisee to subscribers in the Town.

6.2 Payment of Franchise Fee to Town: In the event that the Communications Tax is repealed and no successor state or local tax is enacted that would constitute a franchise fee for purposes of 47 U.S.C. § 641, as amended, Franchisee shall pay to the Town a Franchise fee of five percent (5%) of annual Gross Revenue, beginning on the effective date of the repeal of such tax (the "Repeal Date"). Beginning on the Repeal Date, the terms of Section 6.2 through 6.6 of this Agreement shall take effect. In accordance with Title VI of the Communications Act, the twelve (12) month period applicable under the Franchise for the computation of the Franchise fee shall be a calendar year. Such payments shall be made no later than thirty (30) days following the

end of each calendar quarter. Should Franchisee submit an incorrect amount, Franchisee shall be allowed to add or subtract that amount in a subsequent quarter, but no later than ninety (90) days following the close of the calendar year for which such amounts were applicable; such correction shall be documented in the supporting information required under Section 6.3 below.

6.3     Supporting Information: Each Franchise fee payment shall be accompanied by a brief report prepared by a representative of Franchisee showing the basis for the computation, and a breakdown by major revenue categories (such as Basic Service, premium service, etc.). The Town shall have the right to reasonably request further supporting information for each Franchise fee payment, subject to the proprietary information provision of Section 8.7.

6.4     Limitation on Franchise Fee Actions: The period of limitation for recovery of any Franchise fee payable hereunder shall be five (5) years from the date on which payment by Franchisee is due.

6.5     Bundled Services: If cable services subject to a franchise fee, or any other fee determined by a percentage of the cable operator's gross revenues in a locality, are provided to subscribers in conjunction with other services: the fee shall be applied only to the value of these cable services, as reflected on the books and records of the cable operator in accordance with rules, regulations, standards, or orders of the Federal Communications Commission or the State Corporation Commission, or generally accepted accounting principles. Any discounts resulting from purchasing the services as a bundle shall be reasonably allocated between the respective services that constitute the bundled transaction.

6.6     Books and Records Regarding Franchise Fees. Subject to the confidentiality requirements of Section 8.7 of this Agreement, the Town, or such Person or Persons designated by the Town, shall have the right to inspect and copy records and the right to audit and to recompute any amounts determined to be payable under this Franchise, without regard to by whom they are held. If an audit discloses an overpayment or underpayment of franchise fees, the Town shall notify the Franchisee of such overpayment or underpayment within ninety (90) days of the date the audit was completed. The Town, in its sole discretion, shall determine the completion date for any audit conducted hereunder. Audit completion is not to be unreasonably delayed by either party. Subject to the confidentiality requirements of Section 8.7 of this Franchise, the Franchisee shall be responsible for providing to the Town all records necessary to confirm the accurate payment of franchise fees. The Franchisee shall maintain such records for the current year plus three (3) years. The Town's audit expenses shall be borne by the Town unless the audit determines the payment to the Town should be increased by more than five percent (5%) in the audited period, in which case the costs of the audit shall be paid by the Franchisee to the Town within thirty (30) days following written notice to the Franchisee by the Town of the underpayment, which notice shall include a copy of the audit report. If recomputation results in additional revenue to be paid by Franchisee to the Town, such amount shall be subject to an interest charge in

accordance with the Town's standard rate for computing interest charges on late payments.

## **SECTION 7 - Customer Service Standards; Customer Bills; and Privacy Protection**

7.1 Customer Service Standards. The Franchisee shall comply in all respects with the customer service requirements established by the FCC. Franchisee shall be subject to the following customer service standards consistent with 47 U.S.C. §§ 76.309, 1602, 1603, 1618 and 1619:

7.1.1 Franchisee will maintain a local or toll-free telephone access line which will be available to its subscribers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Additionally, Franchisee and the Town agree that, in view of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's presence in the Town and the extraordinary number of equipment exchanges that are necessitated by students arriving and leaving that school, it is appropriate that Franchisee will also maintain a local business office in the Town or within a convenient location outside the Town, but not farther than Radford, Virginia, for subscribers to make payments and exchange equipment.

7.1.2 Under normal operating conditions, telephone answer time by a customer representative or automated answering device, including wait time, shall not exceed thirty (30) seconds when the connection is made. If the call needs to be transferred, transfer time shall not exceed thirty (30) seconds. These standards shall be met no less than ninety (90) percent of the time under normal operating conditions as measured on a quarterly basis.

7.1.3 Under normal operating conditions, the customer will receive a busy signal less than three percent (3%) of the time.

7.1.4 Franchisee shall accurately collect and maintain data to measure its compliance with the telephone answering standards in Sections 7.1.2 and 7.1.3.

7.1.5 Customer service centers and bill payment locations will be open at least during normal business hours and one or more bill payment locations will be conveniently located in the Blacksburg area.

7.1.6 Installations, Outages, and Service Calls. Under normal operating conditions, each of the following standards will be met no less than ninety five percent (95%) of the time as measured on a quarterly basis.

7.1.6.1 Standard installations will be performed within seven business days after an order has been placed, unless the customer requests a longer period. "Standard" installations are those that are within 150 feet of the existing distribution system.



7.1.6.2 Excluding conditions beyond the control of the Franchisee, the Franchisee will begin repairs on Service Outages promptly and in no event later than twenty-four (24) hours after the outage becomes known.

7.1.6.3 The Franchisee must begin working to correct Service Interruptions within 24 hours, including weekends, of receiving a subscriber call for a Service Interruption.

7.1.7 Franchisee shall accurately collect and maintain data to measure its compliance with subparagraph 7.1.6.

7.1.8 The "appointment window" alternatives for installations, service calls and other installation activities will either be at a specific time or, at maximum, a four-hour time block during normal business hours. Franchisee may schedule service calls and other installation activities outside of normal business hours for the express convenience of the customer.

7.1.9 Franchisee may not cancel an appointment with a customer after the close of business on the business day prior to the scheduled appointment. If Franchisee representative is running late for an appointment with a customer and will not be able to keep the appointment as scheduled, the customer will be contacted. The appointment will be rescheduled as necessary, at a time which is convenient for the customer.

7.1.10 Franchisee shall provide written information on each of the following areas at the time of installation of service, at least annually to all subscribers, and at any time upon request:

- (i) Products and services offered;
- (ii) Prices and options for programming services and conditions of subscription to programming and other services;
- (iii) Installation and service maintenance policies;
- (iv) Instructions on how to use the cable service;
- (v) Channel positions of programming carried on the system;
- (v) Refund policy; and
- (vii) Billing and complaint procedures, including the Franchisee's office hours, telephone number, and address of the local cable office.

7.2 Customer Bills. Customer bills shall be designed in such a way as to present the information contained therein clearly and comprehensibly to Customers, and in a way that (i) is not misleading and (ii) does not omit material information. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in Section 7.1, above, the Franchisee may, in its sole discretion, consolidate costs on Customer bills as may otherwise be permitted by Section 622(c) of the Cable Act (47 U.S.C. §542(c)).

7.3 Franchisee shall notify subscribers of any changes in rates, programming services or channel positions as soon as possible in writing. Notice must be given to subscribers a minimum of thirty (30) days in advance of such changes if the change is within the control of the Franchisee. In addition, Franchisee shall notify subscribers thirty (30) days in advance of any significant changes in the other information required by Section 7.1.10.

7.4 In case of a billing dispute, Franchisee must respond to a written complaint from a subscriber within thirty (30) days.

7.5 Refund checks will be issued promptly.

7.6 Credits for service will be issued no later than the customer's next billing cycle following the determination that a credit is warranted.

7.7 Franchisee shall provide parental control devices to all subscribers who wish to be able to block out any objectionable channel(s) of programming from the cable service entering the subscriber's home.

7.8 Privacy Protection. The Franchisee shall comply with all applicable federal and state privacy laws, including Section 631 of the Cable Act and regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

## **SECTION 8 - Oversight and Regulation by Franchising Authority**

8.1 Oversight of Franchise. In accordance with applicable law, the Franchising Authority shall have the right to oversee, regulate and, on reasonable prior written notice and in the presence of Franchisee's employee, periodically inspect the construction, operation and maintenance of the Cable System in the Franchise Area, and all parts thereof, as necessary to monitor Franchisee's compliance with the provisions of this Franchise Agreement.

8.2 Technical Standards. The Franchisee shall comply with all applicable technical standards of the FCC as published in subpart K of 47 C.F.R. § 76. To the extent those standards are altered, modified, or amended during the term of this Franchise, the Franchisee shall comply with such altered, modified or amended standards within a reasonable period after such standards become effective. The Franchising Authority shall have, upon written request, the right to obtain a copy of tests and records required to be performed pursuant to the FCC's rules. The Cable System shall be designed in accordance with the International Telecommunication Union - Telecommunication Standardization Sector G.984 Standard for gigabit passive optical networks.

8.3 Operational Records. The Franchisee shall maintain the records required to compute all operational and customer service compliance measures outlined in this Franchise to demonstrate that the measures are being met for at least four consecutive

quarters. Failure to maintain the records as required herein shall subject the Franchisee to the liquidated damages established in this Franchise Agreement.

8.4 Records Required: Franchisee shall at all times maintain:

8.4.1. Records of all written complaints for a period of one year after receipt by Franchisee or until the applicable compliance measures described in this Franchise are met for four consecutive quarters. The term “complaint” as used herein refers to complaints about any aspect of the Cable System or Franchisee’s cable operations, including, without limitation, complaints about employee courtesy. Complaints recorded will not be limited to complaints requiring an employee service call;

8.4.2. Records of Outages and Service Interruptions for a period of one year after occurrence, or until the applicable compliance measures described in this Franchise are met for four consecutive quarters, indicating date, duration, area, and the number of Subscribers affected, type of outage, and cause;

8.4.3. Records of service calls for repair and maintenance for a period of one year after resolution by Franchisee, or until the applicable compliance measures described in this Franchise are met for four consecutive quarters, indicating the date and time service was required, the date of acknowledgment and date and time service was scheduled (if it was scheduled), and the date and time service was provided, and (if different) the date and time the problem was resolved;

8.4.4. Records of installation/reconnection and requests for service extension for a period of one year after the request was fulfilled by Franchisee, or until the applicable compliance measures described in this Franchise are met for four consecutive quarters, indicating the date of request, date of acknowledgment, and the date and time service was extended; and

8.5 Federal Communications (FCC) Testing: Within fourteen (14) days of a written request by the Town, a written report of test results of FCC performance testing will be provided to the Town Manager/Designee.

8.6 File for Public Inspection. Throughout the term of this Franchise Agreement, the Franchisee shall maintain at a nearby business office, in a file available for public inspection during normal business hours, those documents required pursuant to the FCC’s rules and regulations. Upon reasonable written notice to the Franchisee and with no less than thirty (30) business days’ written notice to the Franchisee, the Town shall have the right to inspect Franchisee’s books and records pertaining to Franchisee’s provision of Cable Service in the franchise area at any time during normal business hours and on a nondisruptive basis, as are reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with the terms of this franchise. Such notice shall specifically reference the section or subsection of the franchise which is under review, so that Franchisee may organize the necessary books and records for appropriate access by the Town. Franchisee shall not be required

to maintain any books and records for franchise compliance purposes longer than the current year plus three (3) years.

#### 8.7 Proprietary Information:

8.7.1 Notwithstanding anything to the contrary set forth herein, Franchisee shall not be required to submit information to the Town that it reasonably deems to be proprietary or confidential in nature, nor submit to the Town any of its or an affiliate's books and records not relating to the provision of Cable Service in the franchise area, except as provided herein. Such confidential information shall be subject to the following, to be applied as is most practicable for the purposes of this Agreement:

8.7.1.1 To the extent an exemption under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act permits the Town to maintain the confidentiality of submitted information and the Franchisee submits such information to the Town, the Town shall maintain the confidentiality of such information and not disclose it to any public request;

8.7.1.1 To the extent the information provided to an accountant, attorney, consultant, or any other agent of the Town ("Town Consultant") would not be subject to public disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and the Town instructs the Franchisee to provide such information to the Town Consultant as may be required by this Agreement, the Franchisee shall provide such information to the Town Consultant and the Town shall not take possession of the information nor engage in any act that would jeopardize the confidentiality of such information; or,

8.7.1.3 Franchisee must provide the following documentation to the Town:

- (i) specific identification of the information;
- (ii) statement attesting to the reason(s) the Franchisee believes the information is confidential; and
- (iii) statement that the documents are available at the Franchisee's designated offices for inspection by the Town.

8.7.2 At all times, the Town shall take reasonable steps to protect the proprietary and confidential nature of any books, records, maps, plans, or other Town-requested documents that are provided pursuant to the Agreement to the extent they are designated as such by the Franchisee. Nothing in this Section shall be read to require the Franchisee to violate federal or state law protecting Subscriber privacy.

8.8 Annual Report. Within ninety (90) days after receipt of a written request by the Town, Franchisee shall submit a written year-end report to the Town. Such report may address, if desired by the Town: (1) major cable-related projects undertaken in the past year and planned for the current year, including construction and upgrade schedules for any new, relocated, or upgraded aerial or underground facilities, and (2) complaints

and service requests received by the Franchisee and any concerns the Town may have concerning Franchisee's customer service performance.

## **SECTION 9 – Transfer or Change of Control of Cable System or Franchise**

9.1 No transfer of this Franchise shall occur without the prior written consent of the Franchising Authority, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld, delayed or conditioned. No transfer shall be made to a Person, group of Persons or Affiliate that is not legally, technically and financially qualified to operate the Cable System and satisfy the obligations hereunder.

## **SECTION 10 - Insurance and Indemnity**

10.1 The Franchisee shall indemnify, hold harmless and defend the Town, its officers, employees, and agents (hereinafter referred to as "indemnities"), from and against:

10.1.1 Any and all third-party claims for liabilities, obligations, damages, penalties, liens, costs, charges, losses and expenses (including, without limitation, fees and expenses of attorneys, expert witnesses and consultants), which may be imposed upon, incurred by or asserted against the indemnitees by reason of any act or omission of the Franchisee, its personnel, employees, agents, contractors or subcontractors, resulting in personal injury, bodily injury, sickness, disease or death to any person or damage to, loss of or destruction of tangible or intangible property, libel, slander, invasion of privacy and unauthorized use of any trademark, trade name, copyright, patent, service mark or any other right of any person, firm or corporation, which may arise out of or be in any way connected with the construction, installation, operation, maintenance, use or condition of the Franchisee's cable system caused by Franchisee, its contractors, subcontractors or agents or the Franchisee's failure to comply with any federal, state or local statute, ordinance or regulation.

10.1.2 Any and all third-party claims for liabilities, obligations, damages, penalties, liens, costs, charges, losses and expenses (including, without limitation, fees and expenses of attorneys, expert witnesses and consultants), which are imposed upon, incurred by or asserted against the indemnitees by reason of any claim or, lien arising out of work, labor, materials or supplies provided or supplied to the Franchisee, its contractors or subcontractors, for the installation, construction, operation or maintenance of the Franchisee's cable system in the Town.

10.1.3 Any and all third-party claims for liabilities, obligations, damages, penalties, liens, costs, charges, losses and expenses (including, without limitation, fees and expenses of attorneys, expert witnesses and consultants), which may be imposed upon, incurred by or asserted against the indemnitees by reason of any financing or securities offering by Franchisee or its affiliates for violations of the common law or any laws, statutes or regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia or of the United States,

including those of the Federal Securities and Exchange Commission, whether by the Franchisee or otherwise.

10.2 Damages shall include, but not be limited to, penalties arising out of copyright infringements and damages arising out of any failure by the Franchisee to secure consents from the owners, authorized distributors or licensees, or programs to be delivered by the Franchisee's cable system.

10.3 The Franchisee undertakes and assumes for its officers, agents, contractors and subcontractors and employees all risk of dangerous conditions, if any, on or about any Town-owned or controlled property, including streets and public rights-of-ways, and the Franchisee hereby agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the indemnitees against and from any claim asserted or liability imposed upon the indemnitees for personal injury or property damage to any person arising out of the installation, operation, maintenance or condition of the Franchisee's cable system or the Franchisee's failure to comply with any federal, state or local statute, ordinance or regulation, except for any claim asserted or liability imposed upon the indemnitees that arises or is related to wanton or willful negligence by the indemnitees.

10.4 In the event any action or proceeding shall be brought against the indemnitees by reason of any matter for which the indemnitees are indemnified hereunder, the Franchisee shall, upon notice from any of the indemnitees, and at the Franchisee's sole cost and expense, resist and defend the same, provided further, however, that the Franchisee shall not admit liability in any such matter on behalf of the indemnitees without the written consent of the Town Attorney or his or her designee.

10.5 The Town shall give the Franchisee prompt notice of the making of any written claim or the commencement of any action, suit or other proceeding covered by the provisions of this section.

10.6 Nothing in this ordinance or in a franchise is intended to, or shall be construed or applied to, express or imply a waiver by the Town of statutory provisions, privileges or immunities of any kind or nature as set forth in the Code of Virginia, including the limits of liability of the Town as exists presently or as may be increased from time to time by the legislature. Nothing in a franchise or this ordinance shall constitute a waiver of the Town's statutory provisions, privileges or immunities, including the Town's sovereign immunity, of any kind or nature.

10.7 The Franchisee shall maintain, and by its acceptance of a franchise hereunder specifically agrees that it will maintain throughout the term of the franchise, general comprehensive liability insurance insuring the Franchisee. All liability insurance shall include an endorsement in a specific form which names as joint and several insured's the Town and the Town's officials, employees and agents, with respect to all claims arising out of the operation and maintenance of the Franchisee's cable system in the Town. Liability insurance mentioned herein below shall be in the minimum amounts of:

10.7.1 \$5,000,000.00 for bodily injury or death to anyone person, within the limit of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) for bodily injury or death resulting from any one accident;

10.7.2 \$5,000,000.00 for property damage, including damage to the Town's property, from any one accident;

10.7.3 \$5,000,000.00 for all other types of liability resulting from any one occurrence;

10.7.4 Workers Compensation Insurance as required by the Commonwealth of Virginia;

10.7.5 Franchisee shall carry and maintain in its own name automobile liability insurance with a limit of \$5,000,000 for each person and \$5,000,000 for each accident for property damage with respect to owned and non-owned automobiles for the operation of which the Franchisee is responsible; and

10.7.6 Coverage for copyright infringement.

10.8 The inclusion of more than one (1) insured shall not operate to increase the limit of the Franchisee's liability, and that insurer waives any right on contribution with insurance which may be available to the Town.

10.9 All policies of insurance required by this section shall be placed with companies which are qualified to write insurance in the Commonwealth of Virginia and which maintain throughout the policy term a General Rating of "A-VII" and a Financial Size Category of "A:X" as determined by Best Insurance Rating Services.

10.10 Certificates of insurance obtained by the Franchisee in compliance with this section must be approved by the Town Attorney, and such insurance policy certificate of insurance shall be filed and maintained with the Town's Finance Director during the term of the franchise. The Franchisee shall immediately advise the Town Attorney of any litigation that may develop that would affect this insurance.

10.11 Should the Town find an insurance document to be in non-compliance, then it shall notify the Franchisee, and the Franchisee shall be obligated to cure the defect.

10.12 Neither the provisions of this section, nor any damages recovered by the Town thereunder, shall be construed to nor limit the liability of the Franchisee under any franchise issued hereunder or for damages.

10.13 The insurance policies provided for herein shall name the Town, its officers, employees and agents as additional insureds, and shall be primary to any insurance or self-insurance carried by the Town. The insurance policies required by this section shall be carried and maintained by the Franchisee throughout the term of the franchise and such other period of time during which the Franchisee operates or is

engaged in the removal of its cable system. Each policy shall contain a provision providing that the insurance policy may not be canceled by the surety, nor the intention not to renew be stated by the surety, until thirty (30) days after receipt by the Town, by registered mail, of written notice of such intention to cancel or not to renew.

10.14 Nothing in this section shall require Franchisee to indemnify, hold harmless or defend the Town, its officials, employees or agents, from any claims or lawsuits arising out of the Town's award of a franchise to another person.

## **SECTION 11 - System Description and Service**

11.1 System Characteristics: Franchisee's Cable System shall meet or exceed the following requirements:

11.1.1 The System shall provide bandwidth capacity capable of carrying one hundred (100) channels of video programming.

11.1.2 The System shall be designed to be an active two-way plant for subscriber interaction, if any, required for selection or use of Cable Service. The digital offerings shall include some high definition Cable Service.

11.1.3 The Cable Service shall be operated in a manner such that it is in compliance with FCC standards and requirements with respect to interference. The Cable System shall be operated in such a manner as to minimize interference with the reception of off-the-air signals by a Subscriber. The Franchisee shall insure that signals carried by the Cable System, or originating outside the Cable System wires, cable, fibers, electronics and facilities, do not ingress, or egress into or out of the Cable System in excess of FCC standards. In particular, the Franchisee shall not operate the Cable System in such a manner as to pose unwarranted interference with emergency radio services, aeronautical navigational frequencies or an airborne navigational reception in normal flight patterns, or any other type of wireless communications, pursuant to FCC regulations.

11.2 Interconnection: The Franchisee shall design its Cable System so that it may be interconnected with other cable systems and open video systems in the Franchise Area. Interconnection of systems may be made by direct cable connection, microwave link, satellite, or other appropriate methods.

11.3 Standby Power: The Franchisee shall provide standby power generating capacity at the headend and at all hubs. The Franchisee shall maintain standby power capable of at least twenty-four (24) hours duration at the headend and all hubs, with automatic response systems to alert the local management center when commercial power is interrupted.

11.4 Technical Standards: The Cable System shall meet or exceed the applicable technical standards set forth in 47 C.F.R. § 76.601.



11.5 Leased Access Channels: The Franchisee shall provide Leased Access Channels as required by federal law.

11.6 Service to School and Government Buildings. Franchisee shall provide, without charge, one cable service outlet activated for basic cable service to each building used by Town government receiving such service as of the Effective Date, as well as other such buildings where service is requested in the future that are located within the Franchise Area within 200 feet of the Franchisee's distribution cable. The excess cost for extending service to buildings not within 200 feet of the Franchisee's distribution cable shall be paid by the entity requesting service.

11.7 Emergency Powers. In the event of an emergency, or where Franchisee's cable system creates or is contributing to an imminent danger to health, safety, or property, or an unauthorized use of property, the Franchisee shall remove or relocate any or all parts of Franchisee's cable system at the request of the Town. If the Franchisee fails to comply with the Town's request, the Town may remove or relocate any or all parts of the Franchisee's cable system upon reasonable notice to the Franchisee.

11.8 Emergency Alert System. Franchisee shall install and thereafter maintain an Emergency Alert System (EAS) that shall at all times be operated in accordance with FCC rules and the Virginia EAS Plan.

## **SECTION 12 - Enforcement of Franchise**

12.1 If, pursuant to any required public hearing, the Town determines that the Franchisee has failed to materially comply with this franchise, Article 1.2 (§§ 15.2-2108 *et seq.*) of Chapter 121 of Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia, or the applicable mandatory requirements of 47 U.S.C. §§ 521-573 or any regulation promulgated thereunder, the Town may impose any penalty for a violation of the terms of an ordinance franchise that it may impose for a comparable violation under the terms of a negotiated franchise or applicable Virginia or Town law, including, without limitation, revocation of the franchise.

12.2 Within thirty (30) days after the award of a franchise, the Franchisee shall deposit with the Town a performance bond or an irrevocable letter of credit from a financial institution running to the Town in the amount of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00.). The bond or letter of credit shall be used to insure the faithful performance by the Franchisee of all of the provisions of its franchise and this ordinance, Sections 15.2-2108.19 *et seq.* of the Code of Virginia, and the mandatory requirements of 47 U.S.C. §§ 521-573 and any rules promulgated thereunder, and compliance with all lawful orders, permits, and directions of any agency, commission, board, department, division, or office of the Town or VDOT having jurisdiction over the acts of the Franchisee, or defaults under a franchise or the payment by Franchisee of any penalties, liquidated damages, claims, liens, and taxes due the Town which arise by reason of the construction, operation, or maintenance of Franchisee's cable system in the Town, including

restoration of the public rights-of-way and the cost of removal or abandonment of any property of a cable operator.

12.3 Any bond obtained by Franchisee must be placed with a company which is qualified to write bonds in the Commonwealth of Virginia, such bond shall be subject to the approval of the Town Attorney, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld or denied, and shall contain the following endorsement (or the substantive equivalent of such language as agreed upon by the Town):

“It is hereby understood and agreed that this bond may not be cancelled without the consent of the Town until sixty (60) days after receipt by the Town by registered mail, return receipt requested, of a written notice of intent to cancel or not renew.”

12.4 Any letter of credit must be issued by a federally insured commercial lending institution and shall be subject to the approval of the Town Attorney, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld or denied.

12.4.1 The letter of credit may be drawn upon by the Town by presentation of a draft at sight on the lending institution, accompanied by a written certificate signed by the Town Manager or his designee, certifying that the Franchisee has failed to comply with this ordinance after having been given due notice and opportunity to cure the failure to comply. Such certificate shall also state the specific reasons for the failure of compliance, and stating the basis of the amount being drawn.

12.4.1.1 The Town may withdraw money from the letter of credit in accordance with the procedures set forth in this section.

12.4.1.2 The Town shall provide the Franchisee with written notice informing the Franchisee that such amounts are due to the Town. The written notice shall describe, in reasonable detail, the reasons for the assessment. In accordance with Section 12.7, the Franchisee shall cure every failure cited by the Town or notify the Town that there is a dispute as to whether Franchisee believes such amounts are due the Town. Such notice by the Franchisee to the Town shall specify with particularity the basis of Franchisee's belief that such monies are not due the Town.

12.4.1.3 Upon the delivery of the necessary documents to the lending institution, the Town has the right to immediate payment from the issuer bank of the amount from the letter of credit necessary to cure the default.

12.4.1.4 Any letter of credit shall contain the following endorsement: "It is hereby understood and agreed that this letter of credit may not be canceled by the issuer bank nor the intention not to renew be stated by the issuer bank until sixty (60) days after receipt by the Town, by registered mail, return receipt requested, of a written notice of such intention to cancel or not to renew."

12.5 Any bond or letter of credit shall be recoverable by the Town for all damages and costs, whether direct or indirect, resulting from the failure of Franchisee to well and faithfully observe and perform any provision of this ordinance.

12.6 The bond or letter of credit shall be maintained at the amount established herein for the entire term of the franchise, even if amounts have to be withdrawn pursuant to this ordinance. The Franchisee shall promptly replace any amounts withdrawn from the bond or letter of credit.

12.7 Non-compliance procedures.

12.7.1 Should the Franchising Authority believe that the Franchisee has not complied with any of the provisions of this Franchise Agreement, it shall: (i) informally discuss the matter with the Franchisee and (ii) notify the Franchisee in writing of the exact nature of the alleged noncompliance if the discussions described in the foregoing clause (i) do not lead to resolution of the alleged noncompliance. The Franchisee shall have thirty (30) days from receipt of this written notice to: (a) respond to the Franchising Authority, if the Franchisee contests, in whole or in part, the assertion of noncompliance; (b) cure such default; or (c) in the event that, by the nature of default, such default cannot be cured within the 30-day period, initiate reasonable steps to remedy such default and notify the Franchising Authority of the steps being taken and the projected date that they will be completed. The Franchising Authority shall schedule a public hearing in the event that the Franchisee fails to respond to the written notice pursuant to these procedures or in the event that the alleged default is not remedied within thirty (30) days of the date projected above if the Franchising Authority intends to continue its investigation into the default. The Franchising Authority shall provide the Franchisee at least thirty (30) business days prior written notice of such hearing, which will specify the time, place, and purpose.

12.7.2 In the event the Franchisee fails to cure the default within thirty (30) days, fails to file a timely written response, or fails to timely complete the remediation, the Town, if it wishes to continue its investigation into the default, shall schedule a public hearing. The Franchisee shall be notified in writing at least thirty (30) business days prior to the public hearing and shall be provided an opportunity to be heard at the public hearing. The notice shall specify the time, place, and purpose of the public hearing. The Town shall: (1) provide public notice of the hearing in compliance with Virginia law; (2) hear any person interested in the violation under review; and (3) provide the Franchisee with an opportunity to be heard.

12.7.3 The Town shall, within a reasonable time after the closure of the public hearing, issue findings and conclusions in writing, setting forth the basis for the findings, the proposed cure plan and time line for curing the violation, if the violation can be cured, and the penalties, damages and applicable interest, if any, owed.

12.7.4 Subject to applicable federal and Virginia law and the provisions of this ordinance, if the Town determines pursuant to a public hearing that Franchisee is in violation of any provision of this ordinance, Article 1.2 (§§ 15.2-2108 *et seq.*) of Chapter 121 of Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia, or the applicable mandatory requirements of 47 U.S.C. §§ 521-573 or any regulation promulgated thereunder, the Town may apply one or a combination of the following remedies: (i) seek specific performance or other equitable relief; (ii) commence an action at law; (iii) apply penalties

in accordance with Section 12.8, if applicable; or (iv) apply liquidated damages in accordance with Section 12.8, if applicable.

12.7.5 The Town may designate the cable administrator or other designee to conduct the hearings and issue findings and conclusions under this subsection. If the Town does so, the Franchisee may appeal the determination of the cable administrator or other Town designee to the Town Council. Such an appeal shall be heard at a lawfully noticed public hearing.

12.7.6 In the event Franchisee submits notification of unwillingness to comply with any additional service availability requirements as contained in Section 12.2-8 of this Ordinance, or fails to comply with these additional service requirements, the Franchisee's franchise may be terminated after written notice and a public hearing.

12.8 Penalties and Liquidated Damages. Because it may be difficult to calculate the harm to the Franchising Authority in the event of a breach of this Franchise Agreement by Franchisee, the parties agree to liquidated damages as a reasonable estimation of the actual damages. To the extent that the Franchising Authority elects to assess liquidated damages as provided in this Agreement and such liquidated damages have been paid, such damages shall be the Franchising Authority's sole and exclusive remedy. Nothing in this Section is intended to preclude the Franchising Authority from exercising any other right or remedy with respect to a breach that continues past the time the Franchising Authority stops assessing liquidated damages for such breach. Liquidated damages shall not be assessed until the Franchising Authority has completed the procedures set forth in Section 12.7 hereof, including holding a public hearing, and has notified the Franchisee, by certified or registered mail, of the proposed liquidated damage, specifying the violation at issue. The Franchisee shall have thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the written notice to submit payment. If the Franchisee does not make payment within that period, the Franchising Authority may obtain the amount assessed from the Franchisee's performance bond.

12.8.1 The first day for which liquidated damages may be assessed, if there has been no cure after the end of the applicable cure period, shall be the day after the end of the applicable cure period, including any extension of the cure period granted by the Franchising Authority.

12.8.2 Franchisee may appeal (by pursuing judicial relief or other relief afforded by the Franchising Authority) any assessment of liquidated damages within thirty (30) days of receiving written notice of the assessment. Franchisee's obligation to pay the liquidated damages assessed shall be stayed pending resolution of the appeal.

12.8.3 Liquidated damages may be assessed for the following violations of this Franchise Agreement, in the following amounts:

12.8.3.1 Failure to comply with PEG access requirements: \$200, for each violation for each day the violations continues;

12.8.3.2 Failure to render payments due to the Franchising Authority: Three-tenths of one percent (0.3%) of the unpaid amount for each day the violation continues, in addition to any monetary payment due and interest, in accordance with the Town's standard rate for computing interest charges on late payments.

12.8.3.3 Failure to supply information, reports, or filings lawfully required: \$200, for each violation for each day the violation continues.

12.8.3.4 Failure to comply with customer service standards: \$200, for each violation for each day the violation continues, except where compliance is measured quarterly, in which case damages shall be as specified in Section 12.8.3.5.

12.8.3.5 Failure to comply with customer service standards with which compliance is measured on a quarterly basis: \$500 for the first violation in which such standards were not met; \$1,000 for any violation within 18 months after the first; and \$2,500 for any violation within 18 months after the second or any subsequent violation.

12.8.3.6 The Franchisee shall not be charged with multiple violations for a single act or event affecting a single subscriber or for a single act or event affecting multiple subscribers on the same day.

12.8.3.7 The Town may reduce or waive any of the above liquidated damages if it determines, in its discretion, that such waiver is in the public interest.

12.8.3.8 If a court of competent and binding jurisdiction determines that liquidated damages cannot be imposed by this ordinance rather than by contract, the foregoing liquidated damages shall be construed to be penalties to the full extent allowed and contemplated by Section 15.2-2108.22(6) of the Code of Virginia

12.9 Technical Violation. The Franchising Authority agrees that it is not its intention to subject the Franchisee to penalties, fines, forfeitures or revocation of the Franchise for so-called "technical" breach(es) or violation(s) of the Franchise, which shall include, but not be limited, to the following:

12.9.1 In instances or for matters where a violation or a breach of the Franchise by the Franchisee was good faith error that resulted in no or minimal negative impact on the Customers within the Franchise Area; or

12.9.2 Where there existed circumstances reasonably beyond the control of the Franchisee and which precipitated a violation by the Franchisee of the Franchise, or which were deemed to have prevented the Franchisee from complying with a term or condition of the Franchise.

### **SECTION 13 - Inspection of facilities**

13.1 Franchisee shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local construction and engineering codes and regulations, currently in force or hereafter applicable, to the construction, operation or maintenance of its cable system within the Town. The Town shall have the right to review Franchisee's construction plans and specifications to assure compliance with the required standards. After construction has been completed, the Town shall have the right to inspect all construction or installation work performed pursuant to the franchise and to conduct any tests it deems necessary to ensure compliance with the terms of this ordinance and all applicable federal, state and local building and engineering codes. However, the Town shall not be required to review or approve construction plans and specifications or to make any inspections. The Franchisee shall be solely responsible for taking all steps necessary to assure compliance with applicable standards and to ensure that its cable system is installed in a safe manner and pursuant to the terms of the franchise and applicable law.

### **SECTION 14 - Miscellaneous Provisions**

14.1 Force Majeure. The Franchisee shall not be held in default under, or in noncompliance with, the provisions of the Franchise, nor suffer any enforcement or penalty relating to noncompliance or default (including termination, cancellation or revocation of the Franchise), where such noncompliance or alleged defaults occurred or were caused by events which constitute a Force Majeure, as defined in the Agreement.

14.2 Notice. All notices shall be in writing and shall be sufficiently given and served upon the other party by hand delivery, first class mail, registered or certified, return receipt requested, postage prepaid, or by reputable overnight courier service and addressed as follows:

To the Franchising Authority:

Town Manager  
Town of Blacksburg  
300 South Main  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060

To the Franchisee:

Shenandoah Cable Television, LLC  
500 Shentel Way  
Edinburg, VA 22824  
Attn: VP, Industry Affairs & Regulatory

14.3 Entire Agreement. This Franchise Agreement, including all Exhibits, embodies the entire understanding and agreement of the Franchising Authority and the Franchisee with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior understandings, agreements and communications, whether written or oral. All ordinances or parts of ordinances that are in conflict with or otherwise impose obligations different from the provisions of this Franchise Agreement are superseded by this Franchise Agreement.

14.4 Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or other portion of this Franchise Agreement is, for any reason, declared invalid, in whole or in part, by any court, agency, commission, legislative body, or other authority of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent portion. Such declaration shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof, which other portions shall continue in full force and effect.

14.5 Governing Law. This Franchise Agreement shall be deemed to be executed in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and shall be governed in all respects, including validity, interpretation and effect, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as applicable to contracts entered into and performed entirely within the Commonwealth.

14.6 Modification. No provision of this Franchise Agreement shall be amended or otherwise modified, in whole or in part, except by an instrument, in writing, duly executed by the Franchising Authority and the Franchisee, which amendment shall be authorized on behalf of the Franchising Authority through the adoption of an appropriate resolution or order by the Franchising Authority, as required by applicable law.

14.7 No Third-Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Franchise Agreement is or was intended to confer third-party beneficiary status on any member of the public to enforce the terms of this Franchise Agreement.

14.8 No Waiver of Rights. Nothing in this Franchise Agreement shall be construed as a waiver of any rights, substantive or procedural, Franchisee may have under federal or state law unless such waiver is expressly stated herein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Franchise Agreement has been executed by the duly authorized representatives of the parties as set forth below, as of the date set forth below:

Attest:

Town of Blacksburg, Virginia:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Clerk

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Marc A. Verniel  
Title: Town Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Attest:

Shenandoah Cable Television, LLC

\_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Chris Kyle

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Title: Vice President



Exhibit A

